



MADD

Activism | Victim Services | Education

March 21, 2007

Homer Smith
Executive Director
MADD Michigan
701 W. Jolly Road
Lansing, MI 48911

Dear Homer:

I appreciated the opportunity to spend some time in Michigan last week, both to attend the state's annual Traffic Safety Summit and to meet key legislators and staff working on a variety of public safety issues.

Our meetings with Senator Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Representative Paul Condino (D-Southfield), Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, were especially productive as we discussed pending drunk driving legislation. We should be thankful these distinguished members have become legislative champions for your efforts.

As you know, MADD's #1 public policy priority is our new national campaign to eliminate drunk driving, and one of our key strategic objectives is to ensure that **every** drunk driver at .08 BAC and above has an ignition interlock device installed in order to change behavior and reduce recidivism.

While Michigan is considering a "high-BAC" offense at this time, it is very important the blood alcohol threshold for "extreme" drunk driving in your bill does not exceed the nationally-accepted rate of 0.15 BAC and above. Common sense, public safety, and reams of scientific data support the conclusion that 0.15 BAC is the high risk standard.

Equally important, we support inclusion of specific language in your legislation which will improve the performance standards for certified ignition interlock devices, especially as it relates to specific alcohol fuel cell technology and improved anti-circumvention features such as positive-negative-positive air pressure and/or a mid-test hum tone requirement. These specifications have been instituted recently by administrative rule in Illinois, and we support widespread implementation of these features while NHTSA updates their standards for these life-saving devices.

I look forward to updates as to your progress in the legislature, and please know that the full resources of MADD are behind your efforts to address extreme drunk driving in Michigan. I'll be back!!

Sincerely,

Charles A. Hurley
Chief Executive Officer



MADD's Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving Gains Momentum

Legislative victories on alcohol ignition interlocks in Arizona and Illinois applauded as new national data show drunk driving fatalities on the rise

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WASHINGTON, DC (June 21, 2007) –Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) today announced significant state legislative victories in Arizona and Illinois that mandate alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, moving one step closer to its goal of a drunk-driving free America. The legislative progress is part of a bold new offensive in the war against drunk driving - MADD's *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*, launched in November 2006.

"Our vision of eliminating drunk driving is one step closer to becoming a reality," said MADD National President Glynn Birch. "As part of MADD's *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving*, we will continue to work nationwide until every state does what Arizona and Illinois have done."

MADD is also calling for congressional hearings to develop a comprehensive strategy built upon solutions proven to work. MADD's National Board of Directors met recently with members of Congress to champion the *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* and lobby for increased focus on the issue of drunk driving.

The Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving has four elements: full implementation of alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers, intensive high-visibility law enforcement, development of advanced vehicle technologies to prevent drunk driving and grassroots support led by MADD and its 400+ affiliates.

The need for the *Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving* has been underscored by a recent federal report showing that drunk driving deaths are at their highest point since 1992, according to preliminary figures.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, fatalities involving a driver with a .08 blood alcohol content or higher rose from 13,613 in 2005 to 13,990 in 2006, representing almost a 3 percent increase. At the same time, overall traffic fatalities were down slightly by 0.3 percent.

"It's clear that more of the same will not help in the fight to make our roads safer," Birch said. "We still have states without the most effective tools in place to deter and stop drunk driving—sobriety checkpoints and ignition interlocks. These tools stop higher-risk offenders and first time drunk drivers. There is no justification for not using the tools we know will save lives and prevent injuries."

MADD's aggressive legislative strategy aims to strengthen drunk driving laws in all 50 states. Last month, the Arizona legislature and Governor took a bold step for public safety by mandating

alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. The Illinois legislature also passed interlock legislation last month, which awaits Governor Blagojevich's signature before becoming law. Louisiana , New York , Michigan , Ohio , and Pennsylvania are actively considering interlock laws.

An alcohol ignition interlock is a breath test device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. When a driver wishes to start his or her vehicle, he or she must first blow into the device. The vehicle will not start unless the driver's alcohol level is below a pre-set blood alcohol content (BAC).

"Alcohol ignition interlocks when installed and monitored save thousands of lives and help save society money in part by giving offenders the ability to drive without endangering the public," said MADD CEO Chuck Hurley.

Multiple studies have shown alcohol ignition interlocks are up to 90 percent effective in keeping both first-time and repeat offenders from recommitting the crime as long as the interlock is installed on the vehicle. Furthermore, 65 percent of the public supports the mandatory installation of alcohol ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers.

Early results from New Mexico , the first state to mandate ignition interlocks as part of sentencing for all convicted drunk drivers, make the case for a national alcohol ignition interlock policy if reducing the number of drunk drivers on roadways is a priority.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation reported that alcohol-related injury crashes dropped by 20 percent and overall alcohol-related crashes declined by more than 17 percent in the first year the state adopted mandatory interlock legislation.

Despite a 40 percent decline in alcohol-related traffic fatalities since MADD was founded in 1980, the threat of one of the nations' most deadly crimes still remains. Last year, nearly 14,000 people were killed by drunk drivers with an illegal BAC of .08 or above and countless others are injured. This represents more than 1,000 families every month that must live with the tragic consequences of drunk driving.

About MADD

Founded in 1980, MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime and prevent underage drinking. MADD is a 501c(3) non-profit, grassroots organization with approximately 400 affiliates and 2 million members and supporters nationwide. For more information, please visit www.madd.org or call (800) GET-MADD.

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